

"I was having a problem understanding something in class. When I asked, the teacher said he'd help, but we had trouble arranging a time when we were both on campus. When we finally did meet, I found out he didn't even have a faculty office—we had to meet on a bench outside the student union! Honestly, I was amazed."

### **About FACE:**

The American Federation of Teachers launched the Faculty and College Excellence (FACE) campaign to achieve equity for nonpermanent faculty and to advocate for more full-time permanent faculty.

Ensure that you, your child or your grandchild will get the college education students deserve:  
**Just Ask!**

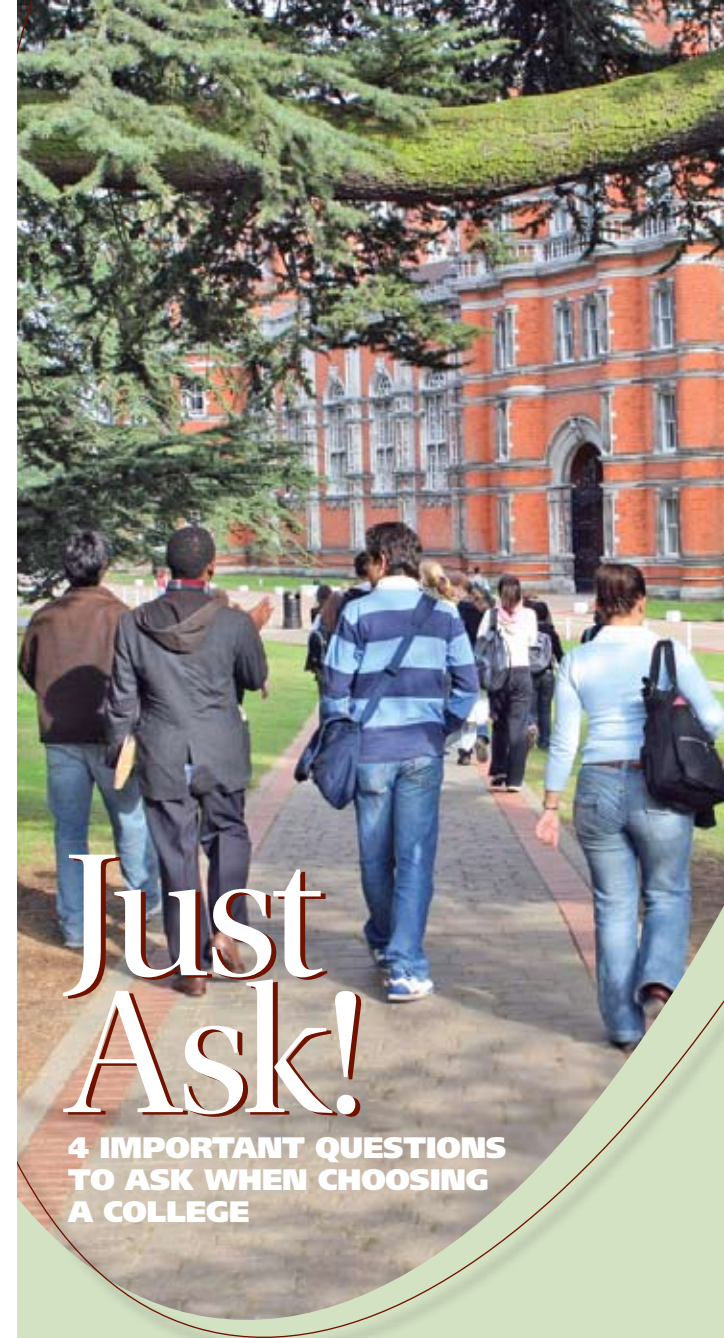
We want to hear from you!  
Tell us what happened when you asked about a college's or university's investment in its faculty.

[www.aftface.org](http://www.aftface.org)



*A Union of Professionals*

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# Just Ask!

**4 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS  
TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING  
A COLLEGE**



*A Union of Professionals*

**AFT Higher Education**

## Just Ask!

It's one of the secrets the glossy college and university catalogs and campus tour guides don't tell you: Colleges and universities are investing less and less in the educators who are crucial to a student's success. In fact, at most colleges today, it's more than likely that students will be taught by an instructor who doesn't have a permanent position on the faculty. Most of these professionals work part time, are poorly compensated and lack basic professional support such as suitable office space to meet with their students. Want to know more? "Just Ask" a college representative these questions and get the real story:

1. **How likely is it that a first- or second-year student at your institution will be taught by full-time, permanent faculty members?**
2. **What percentage of undergraduate classes and discussion sections are taught by part-time faculty and graduate assistants?**
3. **How much do part-time faculty make per course at your institution?**
4. **Are part-time faculty required to hold office hours? Do they get paid to do so, and are they provided suitable office space to meet with students?**

## Why Does This Matter?

College representatives might try to answer your questions by saying their part-time or full-time temporary faculty only teach specialized classes and bring a real-world perspective to the classroom. Or, they might justify temporary faculty's very low salaries by saying

the salaries are for teaching only three hours a week—which is far from the truth, considering the class preparation and grading time necessary.

Don't accept easy answers.

The truth is, instructors who aren't permanent employees not only make

up the majority of the higher education teaching force, but are teaching most of the classes and are teaching across all disciplines, including most core introductory courses. These faculty are great teachers, but they cannot do their best work under the conditions they face

today. After all, **faculty members' working conditions are students' learning conditions.** That's why we urge you to ask college representatives what is really happening with faculty staffing on their campuses. Students and faculty deserve better.

## Choosing a College: Separating Myth from Reality

Visiting a college campus is a big step in making the decision about whether a particular college is right for you, your child or even your grandchild. A college education is an investment, and you should know what you're getting in return. Here's why you should ask questions about faculty makeup and working conditions:

**Fact:** Today, seven out of 10 faculty members are in part-time or full-time temporary positions at our colleges and universities.

**Fact:** More than half of all undergraduate courses across the country are taught by part-time or full-time temporary instructors.

**Fact:** Part-time faculty typically earn less than \$3,000 per course, and often have to teach at several institutions to patch together a living.

"I had an English class when I started here that was the best. I tried to take another class with my teacher, but she told me she's an 'adjunct' and didn't know what classes, if any, she'd be teaching the next semester. And when I was graduating and came back for a letter of recommendation, I was told she was gone altogether."

